Hancock frustrated West Iron through most of their Jan. 24 game, but not here—Adam Newby gets free in the lane for a rebound hoop.

IRON RIVER—Mother Nature decreed back-to-back home games for West Iron's boys last week, and they couldn't have been more different. __PUBLIC__

The Wykons quickly fell behind Hancock Jan. 24 and never caught up with the hot-shooting Bulldogs, losing 61-41. Twenty-four hours later, West Iron went ahead early and never trailed District 95 rival Norway, earning a 52-45 win.

That makes the Wykons 8-4 overall and 3-2 in West Pac Conference play.

Vs. Hancock: The Wykons' zone defense had a rough night during the Jan. 24 (delayed two nights by subzero weather) game against Hancock. The Bulldogs were on target from outside, hitting nine three-pointers in the first half, 10 in the game.

West Iron shot 27% for the night (18 of 66) and was snake-bit early with in-and-out shots. Then again, the Wykons weren't as fired up as you might expect, playing at home for the first time in six games. "You've got to play with more effort than that," Coach Dan Schive said.

Maybe that's partly because of the Bulldogs' hot start. Already ahead 14-6 late in the first quarter, Hancock scored 10 straight, surging to a 24-6 lead early in the second.

The Wykons tried to battle back with a 12-6 rally, including seven points from Brock Hopkins. That cut the gap to 12, but Hancock ended the half on a 7-2 run for a 37-20 lead.

The Bulldogs outscored the Wykons in all four quarters and led by as much as 24. Rough night for the home team.

Big factor: Alex Almquist led both teams with 18 points, nine in the first quarter—Hancock's roster sheet doesn't disclose his height, but he was a full head taller than any Wykon. Matt Yao and Shane Raasio both scored 12. Yao hit four triples, Almquist and Raasio had two each.

Hopkins led WIC with nine points off the bench, including the Wykons' only three. Austin Waara scored eight, and Adam Newby had seven.

Numbers: WIC team: 18-66 (27%) FG; 1x3; 4-7 FT, 16 fouls. Hancock team: 10x3; 9-15 FT; 12 fouls.

WIC stats: Brock Hopkins, 9 points; Austin Waara, 8 pts; Adam Newby, 7 pts; Andy Ridolphi, 5 pts. Hancock stats: Alex Almquist, 18 pts, 2x3; Matt Yao, 12 pts, 4x3; Shane Raasio, 12 pts, 2x3; Riley Engman, 9 pts, 2x3.

Bulldogs	18	19	12	12	--	61
Wykons	6	14	10	11	--	41

Vs. Norway: The Wykons showed a lot more fire 24 hours later in their Jan. 25 win over District 95 rival Norway.

Norway never led but stayed within three possessions almost all night. When the Wykons got their first 10-point lead in the fourth quarter, the Knights immediately rallied 7-0 to get within three (42-39). Time-out, Wykons, with 3:59 left.

Next, Newby scored off an inbounds play. Mike Zygiel's three got Norway within two, but

Stafford converted Hopkins' pass and Waara's bucket from the baseline put the Wykons up 48-42. Another Zygiel three got Norway within three in the final minute, but WIC free throws sewed up the win.

Up to speed: Schive said his team played with an intensity not seen since the Calumet game two weeks earlier. "That's where we need to play and where we're comfortable: intense and fast and hard."

"If we can stay at that intensity, then we can go forward." The regular season is more than halfway over, he said: Time to step up.

Waara led the Wykons with 19 points. "He lifted us tonight where we needed to go." Newby backed him up with 14—including the game's first six points, starting WIC on the right foot.

The coach liked the rebounding he got from Ryan Rogers, Hopkins and Stafford. Turnovers near the basket ruined some scoring chances. ("Our season-long battle to take care of the ball.") Despite Austin Grayvold getting in the lane too often, Schive said WIC played good defense.

Numbers: WIC team, 0x3, 8-10 FT; 15 fouls; 47 rebs. Norway team, 2x3, 11-18 FT, 11 fouls.

WIC stats: Waara, 19 pts, 4 stls, 3 asts; Adam Newby, 14 pts; Alex Ralston, 6 pts; Tyler Stafford, 9 rebs; Brock Hopkins, 8 rebs, Ryan Rogers, 8 rebs. Norway stats: John Grayvold, 14 pts; Austin Grayvold, 13 pts.

Knights	8	10	12	15	--	45
Wykons	12	12	14	14	--	52

Coming up: The Wykons visit Iron Mountain Jan. 29 in their only game this week. They head to Kingsford on Feb. 5.